

# Back to school – back to basics

## Six Pillars of Character

- Trustworthiness
- Respect
- Responsibility
- Fairness
- Caring
- Citizenship

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#CharacterCounts

*From our executive director, Scott Raecker.*

My wife, Martha, is going back to school this week. As an office administrator in an elementary school, she is excited to start a new year. She'll be working at a new school – and while she is excited to serve new teachers, students and families, she has some natural anxiety about beginning a new journey.

For me, every school year and every new experience brings both excitement and anxiety for what is to come. I experienced this balance as an excited student who was also a fearful kindergartner, awkward middle-schooler, unsure high school student, and a college student searching for the right path in life. As a parent it started all over again when we sent our children through every grade from that happily fearful kindergarten drop-off to the joyful anxiety of taking a daughter and son to college.

This balance of excitement and anxiety captures the wide

variety of emotions we feel as we start a new school year (or begin anything new).

The Six Pillars of Character (trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship) can help guide us through new opportunities and face new challenges. Ask:

- What can I do today to act in a capacity worthy of trust?
- Will I treat all people with respect regardless of who they are and how they may treat me?
- Will I be responsible for my choices and the consequences of my decisions?
- Can I be fair and equitable in my decisions and how I treat people?
- Will I demonstrate a caring heart?
- Will I fulfill my duties as a good citizen to my community and school?

Personally, I believe I am able to approach new challenges with confidence because the Six Pillars will help drive my experience. As we head into the new school year and face our natural excitement and anxiety let's think about the Six Pillars of Character as a guide to our actions – and in doing so, we can all have a safe, productive and positive experience as we learn and grow – regardless of our age or role.

[Click here](#) to learn more about character education.